

HUMPHRIES
McGUINNESS
GARRON

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

FARMER
GRACIA

THE BLACK WIDOW

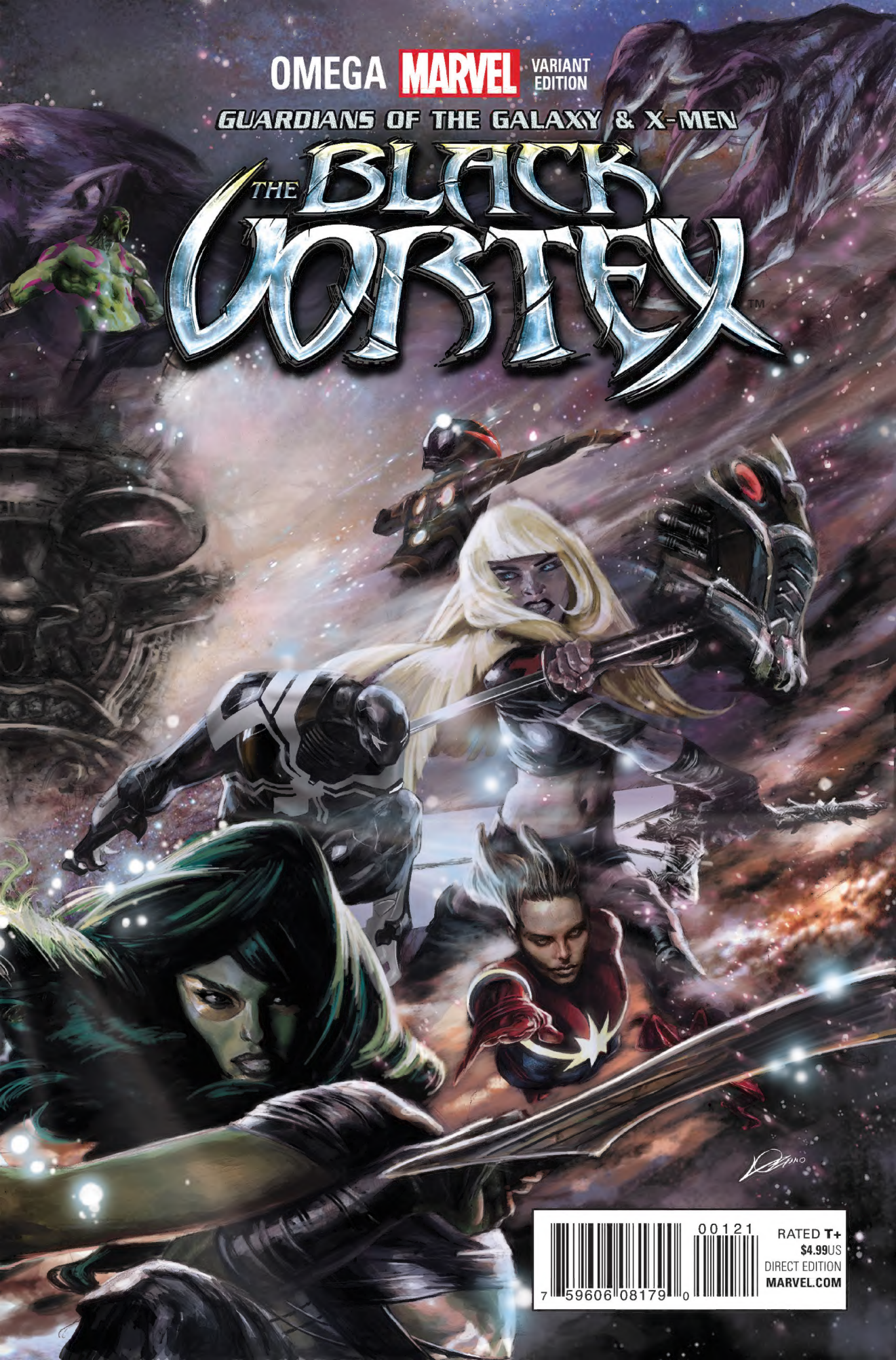


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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

THE BLACK WIDOW



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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

**THE BLACK
CORTNEY™**

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

THE BLACK VORTEX

Chapter 13

Previously in *The Black Vortex*...

Billions of years ago, an ancient race named the Viscardi were gifted an object of immense cosmic power by a Celestial. This artifact, known as the Black Vortex, transformed the user, imbuing them with cosmic energy. However, the power of this object caused the Viscardi to turn on each other, annihilating their own race from within.

When J'Son, Peter Quill's father, obtained the Black Vortex, Peter and Kitty Pryde stole the artifact and recruited the Guardians of the Galaxy and the X-Men for help. Some of the heroes submitted to the Black Vortex, gaining cosmic powers in an effort to save the galaxy from the hands of Mister Knife.

Spartax has been encased in amber by the cosmically empowered Thane, son of Thanos. Knife intends to partner with the Brood in order to rebuild his galactic empire. The Brood would burrow into the amber, implanting eggs into the trapped citizens of Spartax. Should the eggs hatch, a massive new Brood armada, billions strong, would be born.

With the threat posed by the Brood compounding their need to save Spartax, the group knew that one of them would have to submit to the Vortex to stop them. One who could resist the corruption often caused by the Vortex's power. Someone like Kitty Pryde, who stepped forward and accepted her cosmic mantle, submitting to the Black Vortex...

SAM HUMPHRIES WRITER **ED MCGUINNESS AND JAVIER GARRÓN** PENCILS

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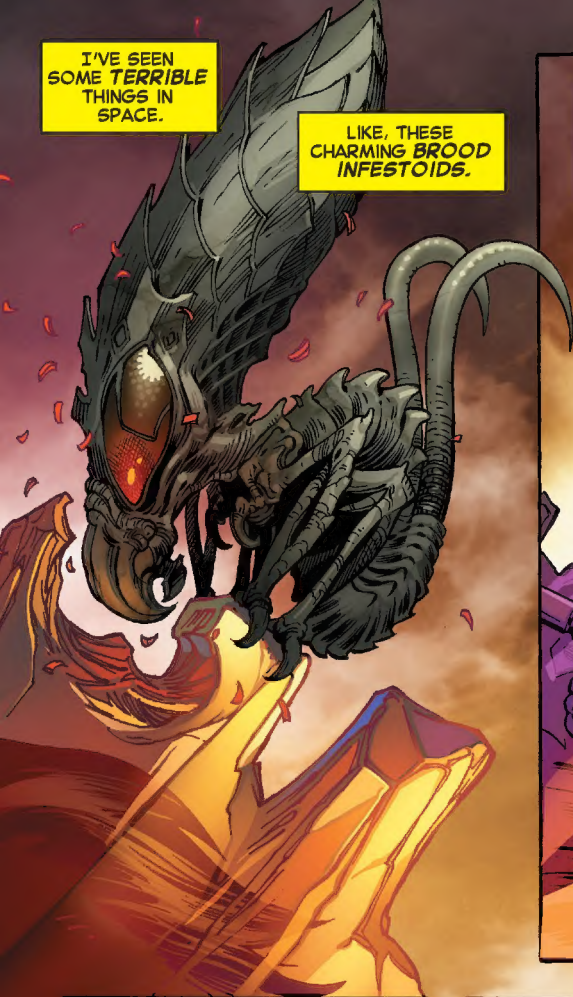
I'VE SEEN
SOME **TERRIBLE**
THINGS IN
SPACE.

LIKE, THESE
CHARMING **BROOD**
INFESTOIDS.

OR TWELVE
BILLION PEOPLE ON
PLANET SPARTAX,
ENCASED IN
LIVING DEATH.

THOSE
INFESTOIDS
ARE ABOUT TO
IMPLANT THEIR
EGGS INTO
THE **SKULLS**
OF ALL THESE
PEOPLE.

LIKE I SAID...
I'VE SEEN SOME
THINGS.



GARA,
ELDER OF THE
UNIVERSE,
SHE TERRIFIES
ME.

MY
BOYFRIEND
PETER, HE'S
TERRIBLY
CUTE.

KITTY...?

WHERE
DID SHE
GO?



AND
THEN THERE'S
THAT DAMN
MIRROR...

SHE'S
GONE--

--YOUR
FRIEND HAS
EMBRACED THE
STARS.

SHE IS
LOST TO US
FOREVER.



**BLACK
WIDOW**
CAUSED ALL OF THIS.

THE *GUARDIANS* AND
THE *X-MEN*, FIGHTING
LIKE HELL AGAINST THE
SLAUGHTER LORDS
TO SAVE SPARTAX.

SOME OF THEM GAVE UP
THEIR HUMANITY IN RETURN
FOR GREAT POWER--TO
DO THE RIGHT THING.



A full-page comic book illustration of a woman with long, flowing, flame-like hair in shades of blue and purple. She has a pale, ethereal complexion and large, expressive eyes. A bright, glowing white star is positioned over her chest, with radiating lines emanating from it. She is set against a deep space background filled with stars, nebulae, and a large, dark, swirling vortex. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, purples, and pinks, with the white star providing a focal point of light.

I DID IT TOO,
THAT'S RIGHT, ME,
KITTY PRYDE,
OF ALL PEOPLE--

--I MEAN, I PREFER
TO SPEND SATURDAY
NIGHT UNDER A BLANKET,
DRINKING TEA, WATCHING
KATHARINE HEPBURN
MOVIES, DARN IT.

AND I HATE
SPACE.

YET I LOOKED THE
BLACK VORTEX IN THE
EYE AND ALLOWED
MYSELF TO BE
TRANSFORMED INTO
SOMETHING COSMIC.

BUT ALL THOSE
TERRIBLE THINGS I
FOUND IN SPACE?

SUDDENLY,
ALL OF THEM
SEEMED VERY,
VERY SMALL.



I COULD SEE THE
REMAINS OF HALA.

BREAKWORLD.

EARTH.

I RELAXED
MY ATOMS, MY
CONSCIOUSNESS.

I PHASED
THROUGH
GALAXIES--

--AND
TRANSCENDED THE
MULTIVERSE.

I TOUCHED THE
CONSCIOUSNESS
OF AN INFINITE
NUMBER OF
KITTY PRYDES.

I KNEW
WHAT THEY
KNEW.

FELT WHAT
THEY FELT.



I PUSHED MYSELF
FURTHER. TO THE
EDGES OF THE
UNIVERSE.

LEFT BEHIND
EVERYTHING
I EVER KNEW.



I FELT
NOTHING.

FORGOT
EVERYTHING.



AND THEN THE
UNIVERSE FINALLY
SHOWED ME
SOMETHING--

--THAT
DIDN'T
TERRIFY
ME.



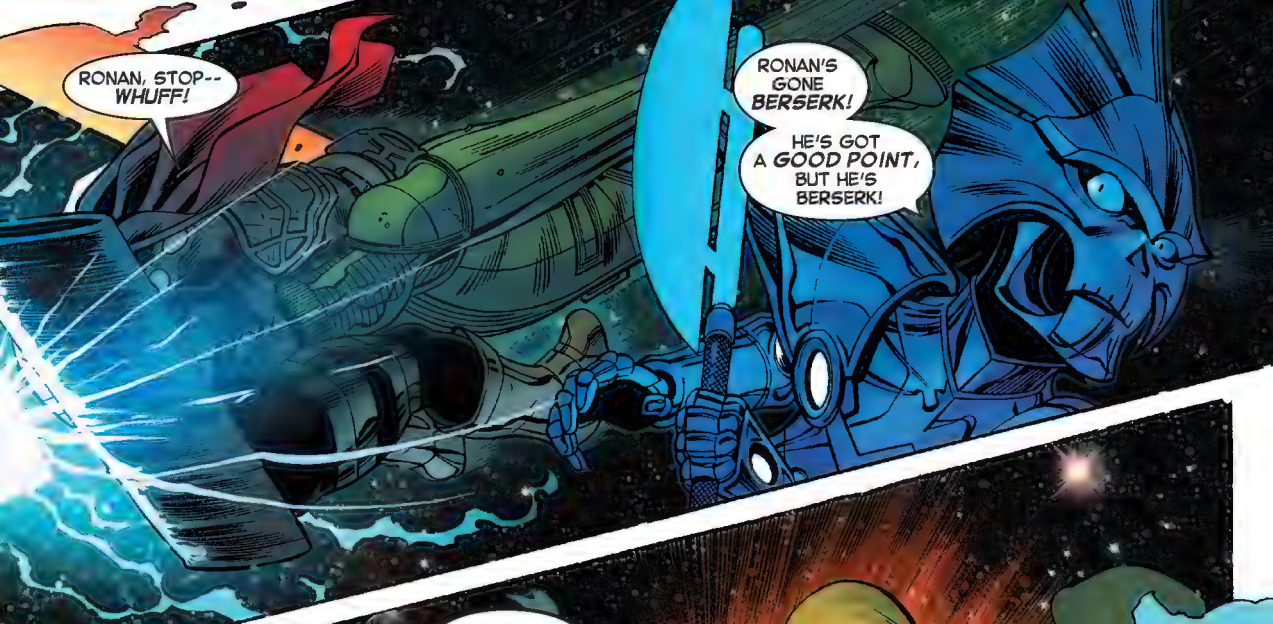
THAT'S
WHEN I
KNEW.



YOU
DEMOLISHED
HALA!

THE
CROWN JEWEL
OF THE KREE
EMPIRE!

YOU
DESTROYED MY
HOMEWORLD!



RONAN, STOP--
WHUFF!

RONAN'S
GONE
BERSERK!

HE'S GOT
A GOOD POINT,
BUT HE'S
BERSERK!



IN THE
NAME OF
THE KREE
EMPIRE!

I
JUDGE YOU
ALL--



GRAAAUGH!

AUGH!



GROOOAR!

KRAAANG

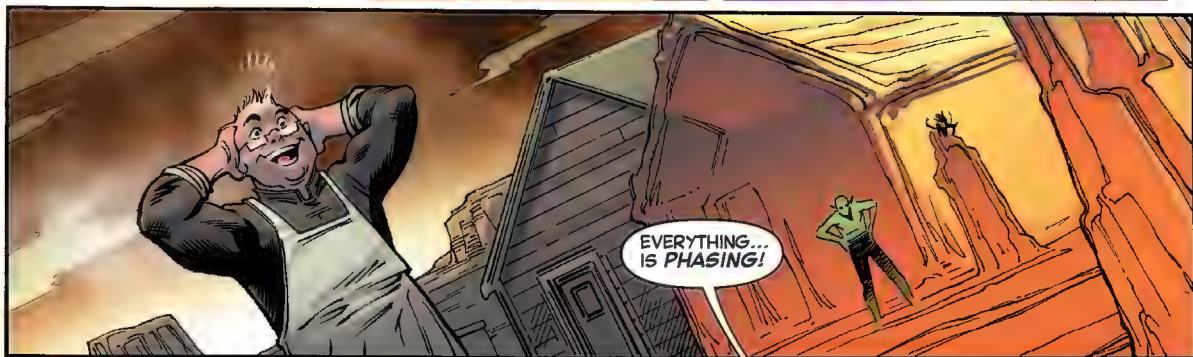
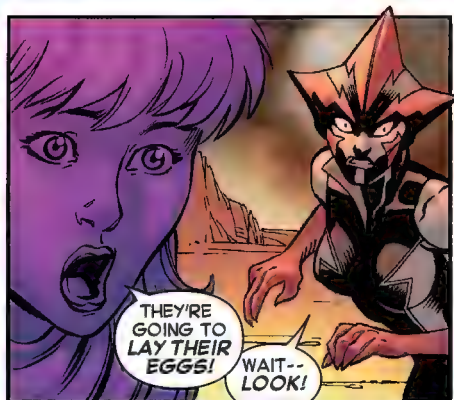
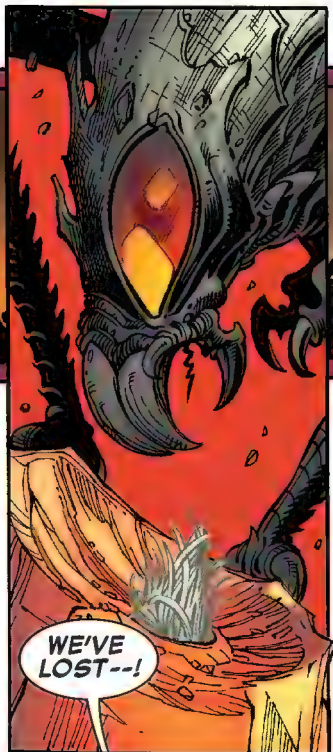
GRRRAH...
I JUDGE
YOU--

--GUILTY!

SLAUGHTER
LORDS!
GUARDIANS!

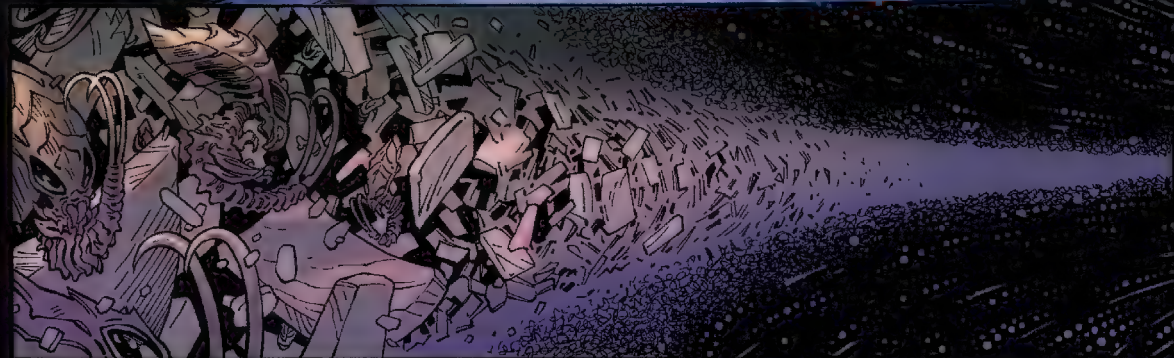
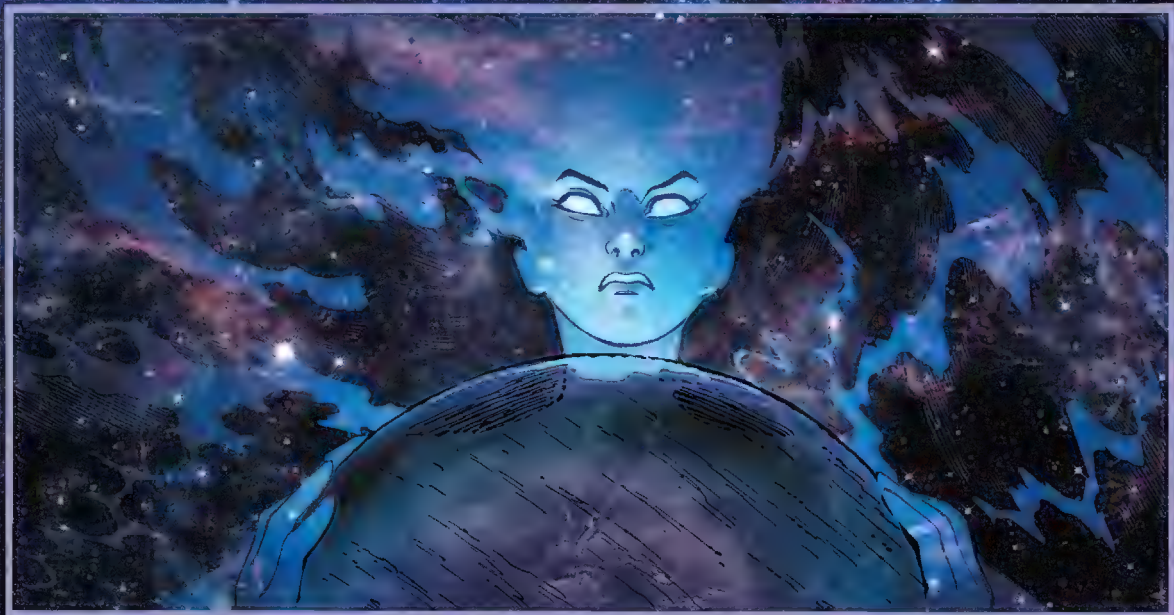
X-MEN!

ANSWER
FOR YOUR
CRIMES
AGAINST
THE KREE
EMPIRE!




THE ENTIRE
PLANET--!



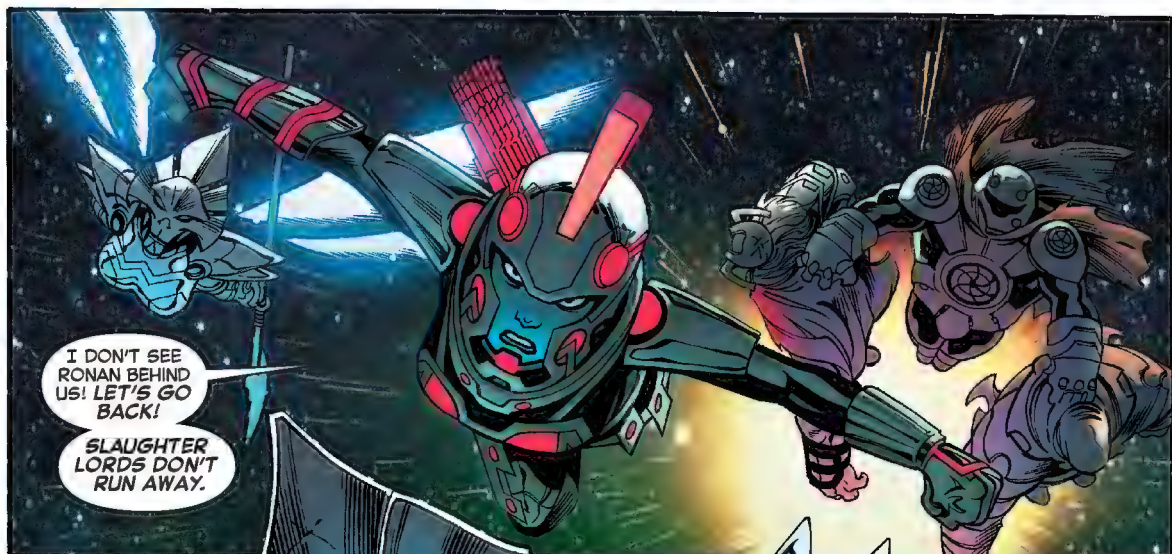






"...SHE'S
KITTYPRYDE."

"MY
DREAM
GIRL."



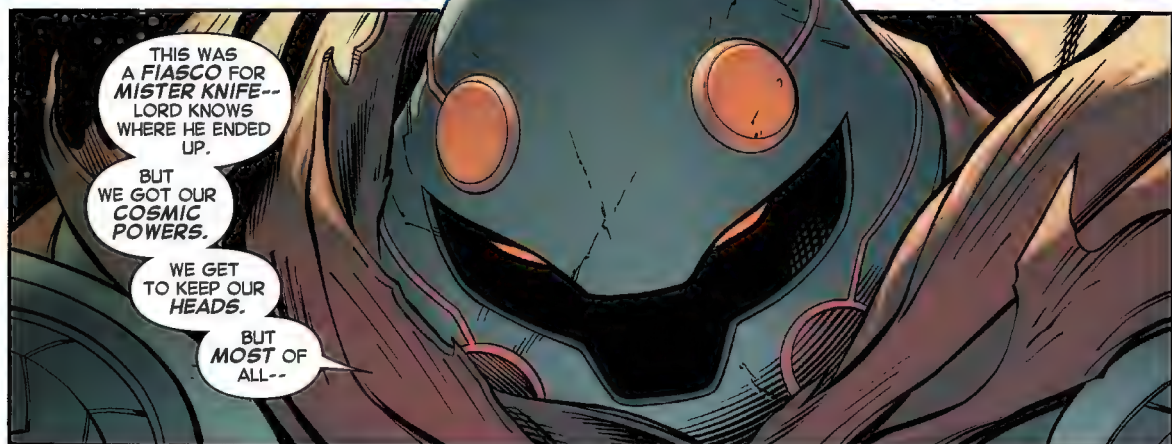
I DON'T SEE
RONAN BEHIND
US! LET'S GO
BACK!

SLAUGHTER
LORDS DON'T
RUN AWAY.



SHUT
UP AND KEEP
MOVING! WE WON'T
GET ANOTHER
CHANCE!

LIVE TO
FIGHT ANOTHER
DAY, YOU
IDIOTS.



THIS WAS
A FIASCO FOR
MISTER KNIFE--
LORD KNOWS
WHERE HE ENDED
UP.

BUT
WE GOT OUR
COSMIC
POWERS.

WE GET
TO KEEP OUR
HEADS.

BUT
MOST OF
ALL--



"--WE KNOW
THAT THE
BLACK VORTEX
IS BACK."

IT'S
STRANGE,
ISN'T IT?





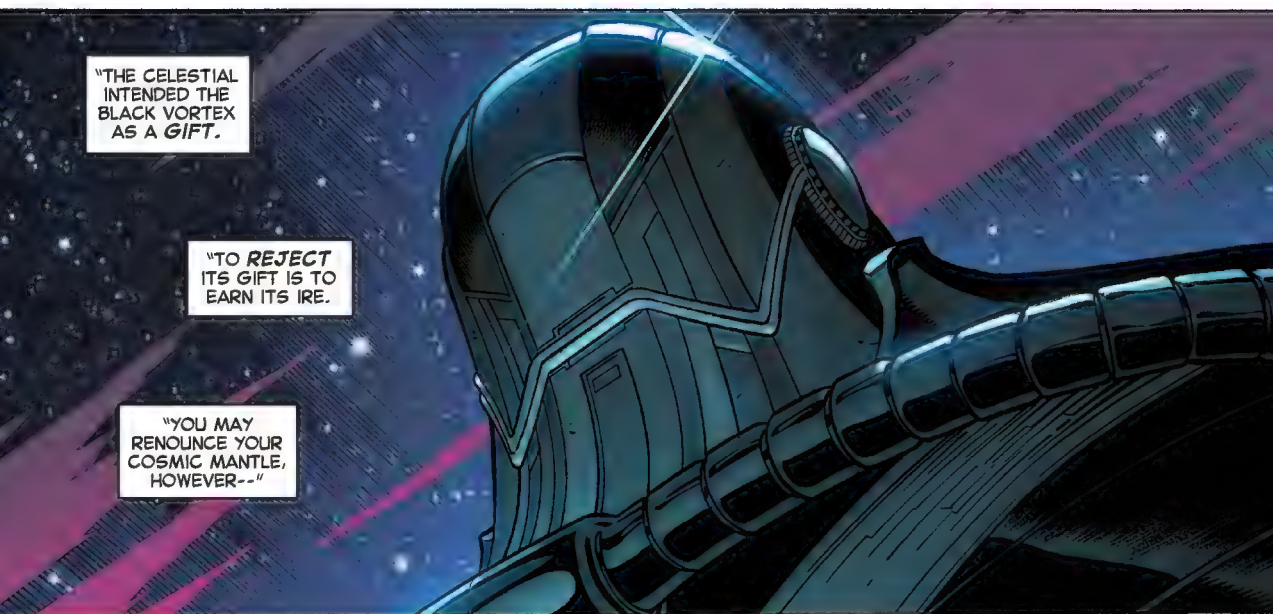
THE VORTEX
CANNOT BE
DESTROYED.
AS LONG AS IT IS
UNBOUND, NO ONE
IN THE COSMOS
IS FREE OF
FEAR.

BUT...
I AM BOUND
BY MY HONOR
TO USE IT
**ONE LAST
TIME.**

TO THOSE
OF YOU WHO
SUBMITTED TO
THE VORTEX,
I OFFER
YOU--

--A WAY
OUT.

WHOA,
THAT'S
GREAT!



"THE CELESTIAL
INTENDED THE
BLACK VORTEX
AS A **GIFT.**

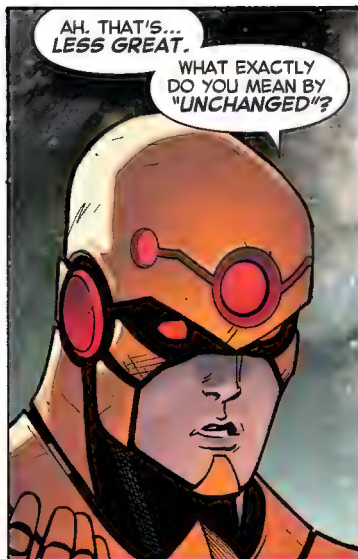
"TO **REJECT**
ITS GIFT IS TO
EARN ITS IRE.

"YOU MAY
RENOUNCE YOUR
COSMIC MANTLE,
HOWEVER--"



--THE CELESTIAL MAY
COME TO **HUNT** YOU.
AND--

--YOU WILL NOT
RETURN TO THE WAY
YOU ONCE WERE. NO
ONE CAN USE THE
VORTEX AND REMAIN
UNCHANGED.



AH. THAT'S...
LESS GREAT.

WHAT EXACTLY
DO YOU MEAN BY
"**UNCHANGED**"?



IT IS...
UNPREDICTABLE.
SOME ARE CHANGED
FOR THE **BETTER.**
OTHERS...

...ARE MORE
UNFORTUNATE.



WHAT SAY YOU? WHAT WILL YOUR PLACE BE IN THE COSMOS?



WELL, I'VE GIVEN IT A LOT OF THOUGHT, AND--

--I HATE THIS HAIRSTYLE.

I AM GROOT.

WE'RE OUT, BABY!

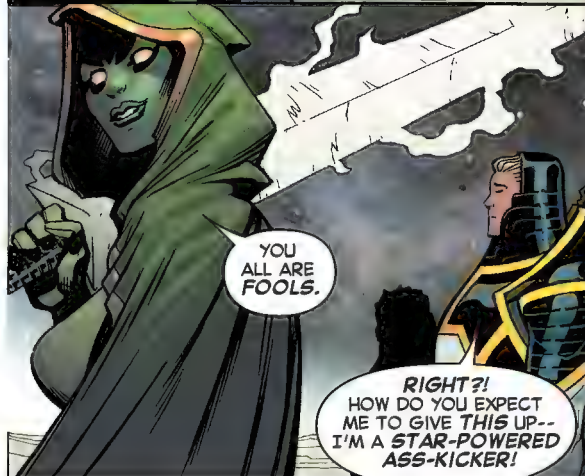


DAD, I--

DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT, SON.

I LIKE BEING A PIRATE BETTER THAN BEING A GOD.

THAT'S MY BOY.



YOU ALL ARE FOOLS.

RIGHT?! HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO GIVE THIS UP-- I'M A STAR-POWERED ASS-KICKER!

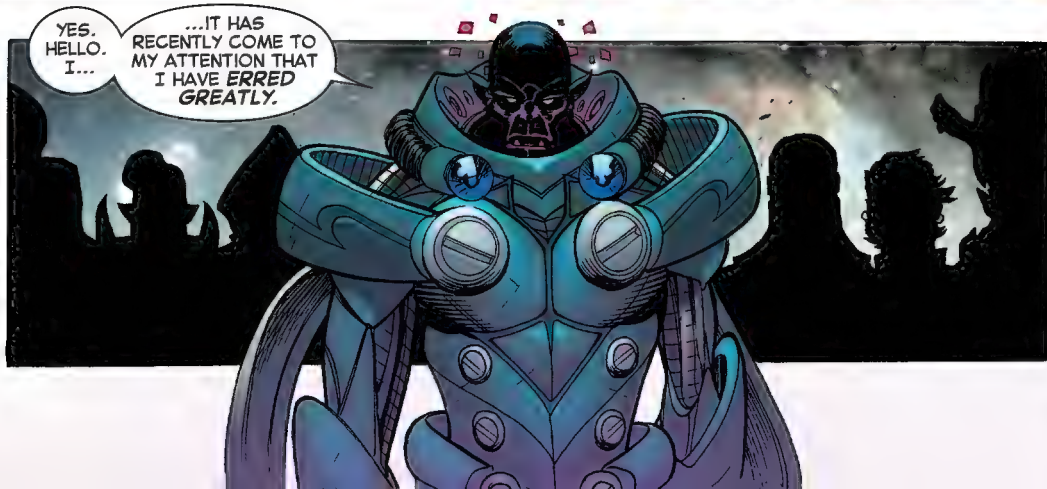


WARREN, HOW CAN YOU BE SO--!

SUCKS TO BE YOU, BRO.

OUR PLACE IN THE TIMESTREAM IS PRECARIOUS ENOUGH WITHOUT YOU--

AHEM.



YES. HELLO. I...

...IT HAS RECENTLY COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT I HAVE ERRED GREATLY.



I HAVE MADE HORRIBLE MISTAKES, AND I NEED TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES. BUT I CANNOT DO THAT... LIKE THIS.

AS A SCIENTIST, IT BREAKS MY HEART TO BID FAREWELL TO THE COSMOS.

BUT AS A MAN... I MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY. I KNOW I HAVE TO DO THIS.

YET, I AM STILL SCARED.

I AM GROOT.



WE'LL BE BRAVE WITH YOU.

THANK YOU, SCOTT.

LET'S DO THIS BEFORE MY EARS POKE OUT AN EYE.

VERY WELL.

FROM SEDIMENT AND CLAY YOU WERE BORN--



--TO EARTH YOU RETURN.



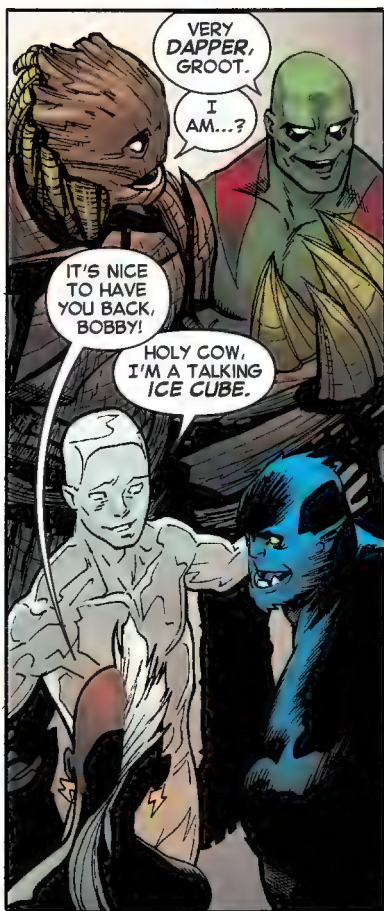
I'M...
OKAY! I'M NOT
GROTESQUE!

(I'M QUITE
HANDSOME!)

I AM
GROOOOOT!

WHOA-HO!
CHECK ME
OUT!

THIS IS
SILICK!

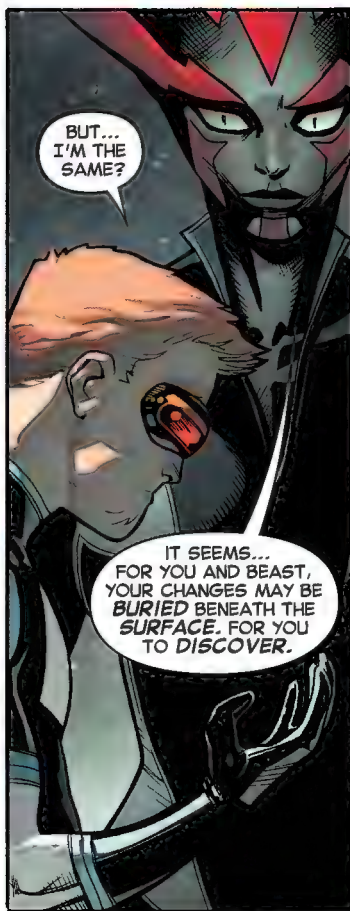


VERY
DAPPER,
GROOT.

I
AM...?

IT'S NICE
TO HAVE
YOU BACK,
BOBBY!

HOLY GOW,
I'M A TALKING
ICE CUBE.



BUT...
I'M THE
SAME?

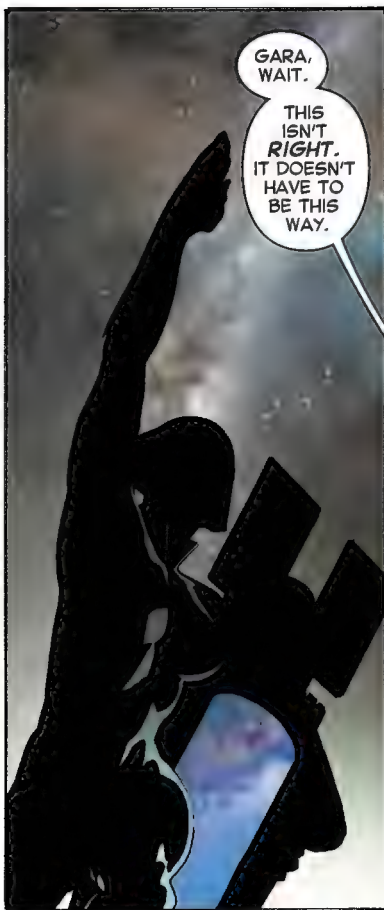
IT SEEMS...
FOR YOU AND BEAST,
YOUR CHANGES MAY BE
**BURIED BENEATH THE
SURFACE.** FOR YOU
TO DISCOVER.



JEAN, DON'T YOU
DARE SCAN HIS
BRAIN FOR--

TOO LATE,
STORM. THE
WORST PART IS...
THE CHANGE DIDN'T
OCCUR IN HIS
MIND.

IT
HAPPENED
IN HIS
HEART.



GARA,
WAIT.

THIS
ISN'T
RIGHT.
IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO
BE THIS
WAY.



THERE'S **SO MUCH**
YOU HAVE DONE
FOR THIS UNIVERSE...
YOU CAN DO EVEN
MORE.

YOU
COULD
JOIN US,
AND--

NO,
KATHERINE.



I HAVE CHASED THE
VORTEX FOR TWELVE
BILLION YEARS. THE
FINAL STEP MUST BE
MINE ALONE.

WE WILL
NOT MEET
AGAIN. NOW,
GO--



"--LIVE A LIFE
FREE OF FEAR."

LISTEN UP!
X-GUYS WHO ARE
GOING BACK
TO EARTH--

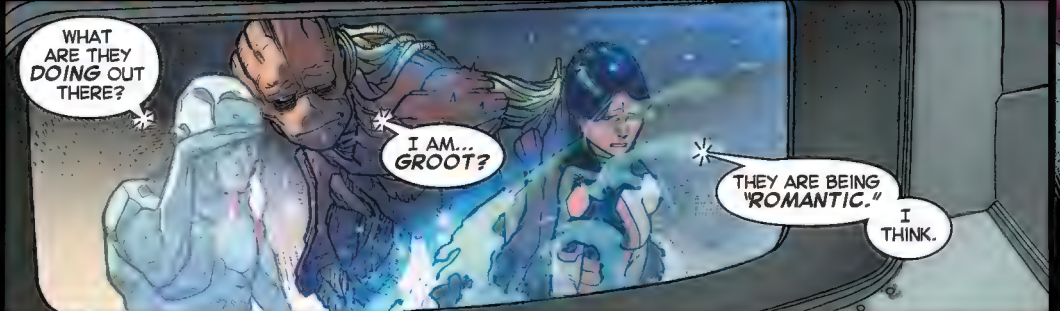
--GET
THE HELL
OFF MY
SHIP!



LYDIA IS FLYING
YOU BACK ON PETER'S
SHIP. EARTH FARMERS
ARE TRIGGER-HAPPY,
AND I DON'T NEED TO
GET SHOT AT
THIS WEEK.

ALSO, I
FLY FASTER
THAN YOU.

WHATEVER.



WHAT
ARE THEY
DOING OUT
THERE?

I AM...
GROOT?

THEY ARE BEING
"ROMANTIC."

I
THINK.



I KNOW YOU TOO, DUMB ASS.
I KNOW YOUUUU...

I KNOW YOU TOO, DUMB ASS.

HUSH, I'M SERENADING YOU.

IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL THIS?

HEY! I WAS ONCE THE FRONTMAN FOR NORTHWEST DENVER'S FOREMOST PUNK/SKA BAND!
I WALKED WITH YOU ONCE UPON A DREAAAAA--

IF YOU KEEP SINGING I'M GONNA CRY.

COME ON, I'M NOT THAT BAD!

NO, IT'S JUST...



...PETER, WHAT IF WE SCREWED UP?!

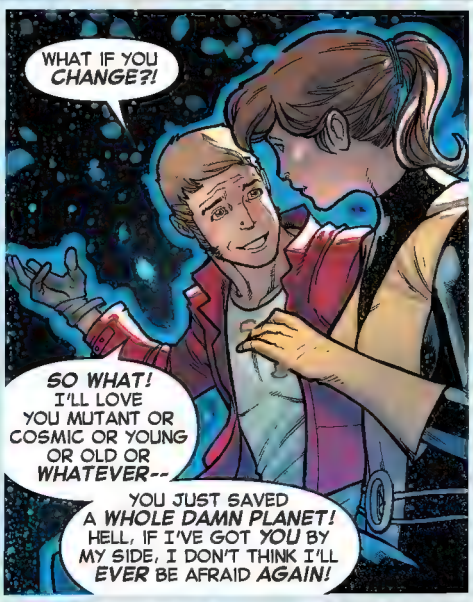


WHAT IF I MADE THE WRONG DECISION?

HOW CAN YOU HAVE A "COSMIC GIRLFRIEND"? I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS WILL DO TO ME!

I'M AFRAID, PETER. WHAT IF IT CHANGES ME? AND WHAT IF IT'S...

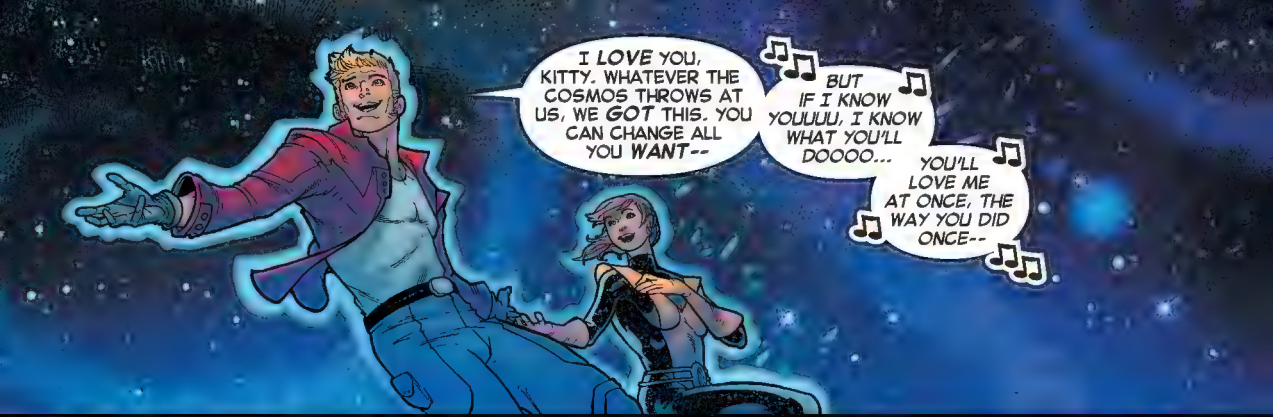
...BAD?



WHAT IF YOU CHANGE?!

SO WHAT! I'LL LOVE YOU MUTANT OR COSMIC OR YOUNG OR OLD OR WHATEVER--

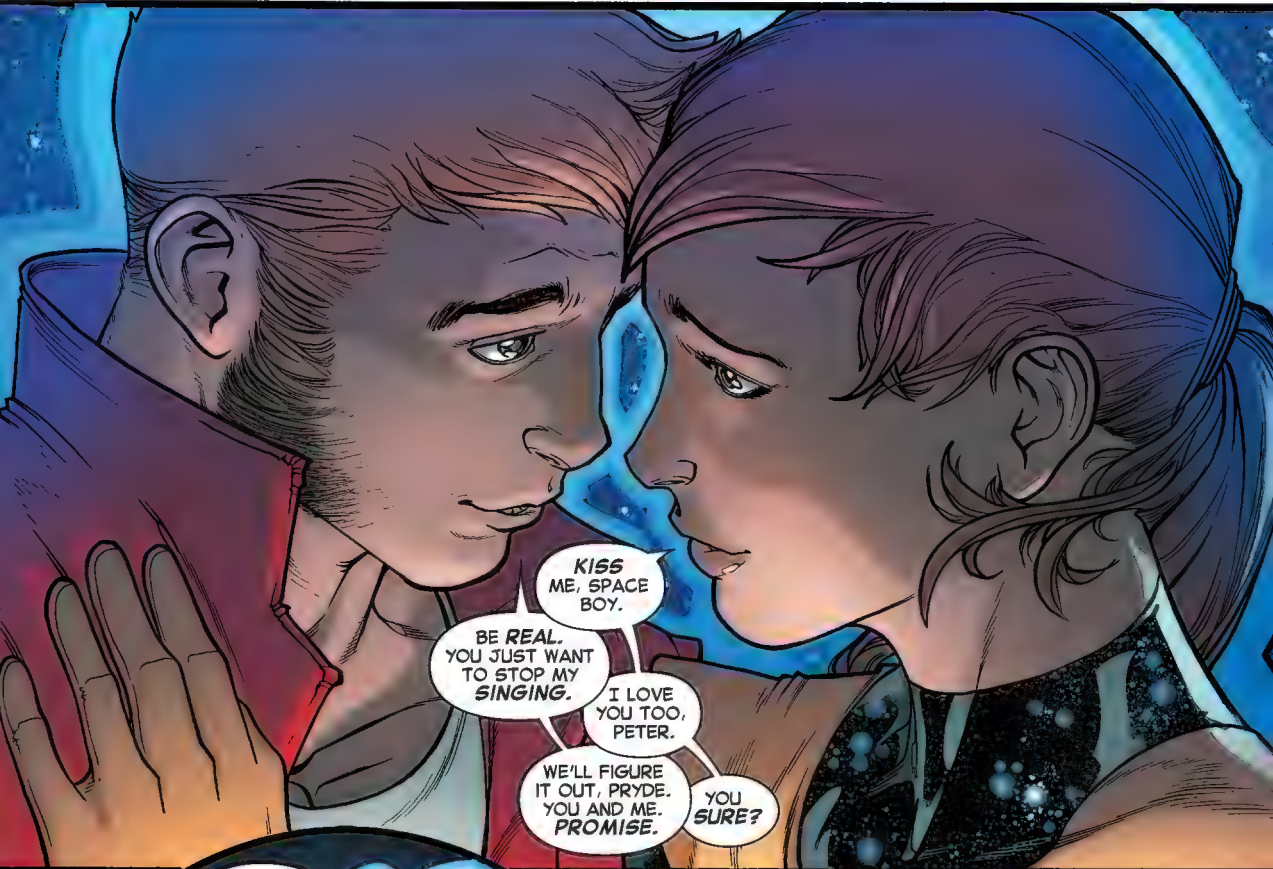
YOU JUST SAVED A WHOLE DAMN PLANET! HELL, IF I'VE GOT YOU BY MY SIDE, I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER BE AFRAID AGAIN!



I LOVE YOU, KITTY. WHATEVER THE COSMOS THROWS AT US, WE GOT THIS. YOU CAN CHANGE ALL YOU WANT--

BUT IF I KNOW YOUUUU, I KNOW WHAT YOU'LL DOOOO...

YOU'LL LOVE ME AT ONCE, THE WAY YOU DID ONCE--



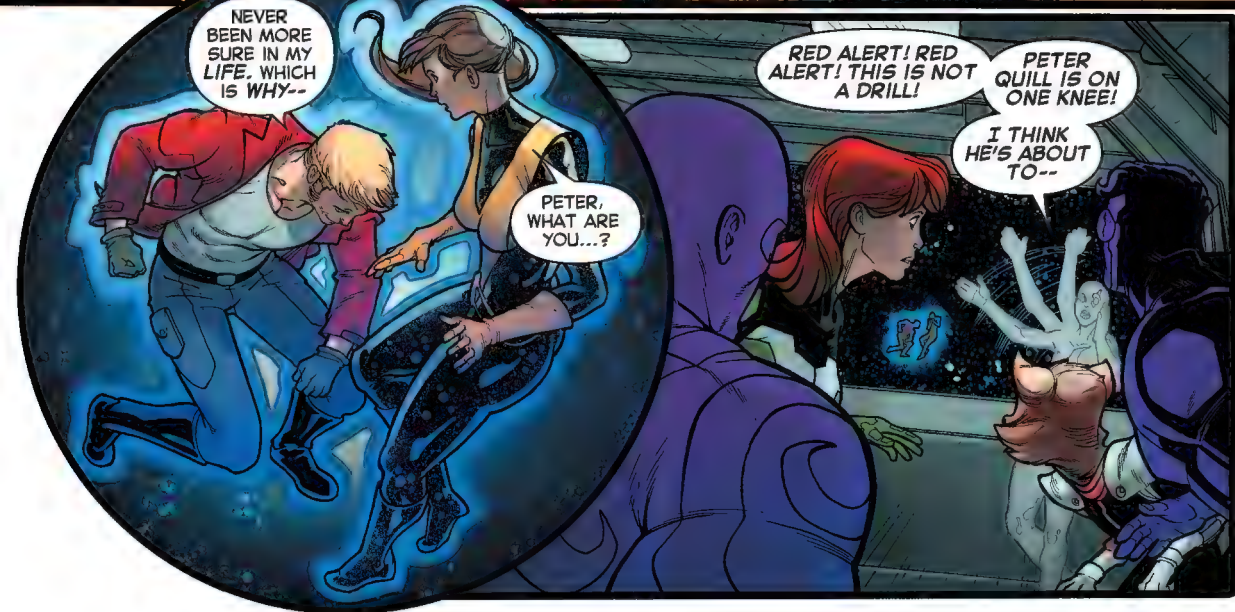
KISS ME, SPACE BOY.

BE REAL. YOU JUST WANT TO STOP MY SINGING.

I LOVE YOU TOO, PETER.

WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT, PRYDE. YOU AND ME. PROMISE.

YOU SURE?




NEVER BEEN MORE SURE IN MY LIFE. WHICH IS WHY--

PETER, WHAT ARE YOU...?

RED ALERT! RED ALERT! THIS IS NOT A DRILL!

PETER QUILL IS ON ONE KNEE!

I THINK HE'S ABOUT TO--

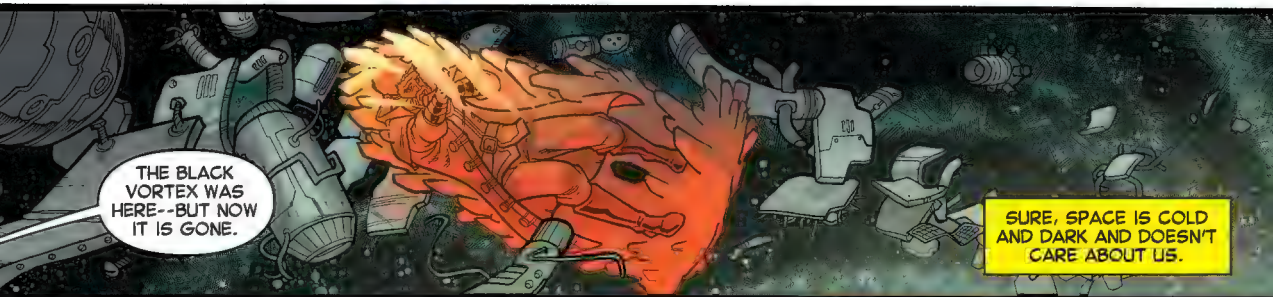


KATHERINE
ANNE SPRITE ARIEL
SHADOWCAT
KITTY PRYDE--

I THINK
YOU'RE THE
GREATEST PERSON
IN THE WHOLE
GALAXY.

WILL
YOU MARRY
ME?

THAT'S
WHEN I
KNEW.



THE BLACK
VORTEX WAS
HERE--BUT NOW
IT IS GONE.

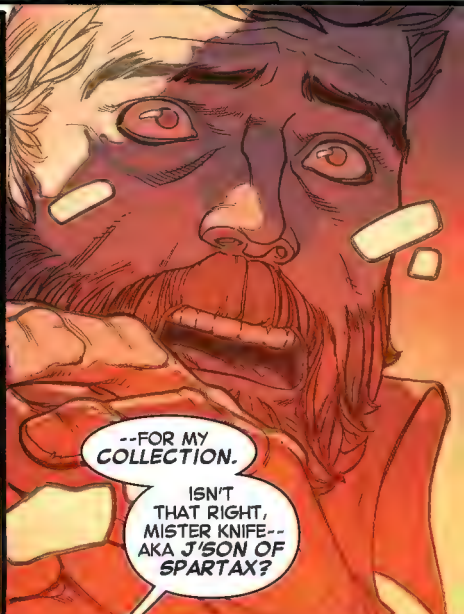
SURE, SPACE IS COLD
AND DARK AND DOESN'T
CARE ABOUT US.



WE ARE
TOO LATE,
COLLECTOR.

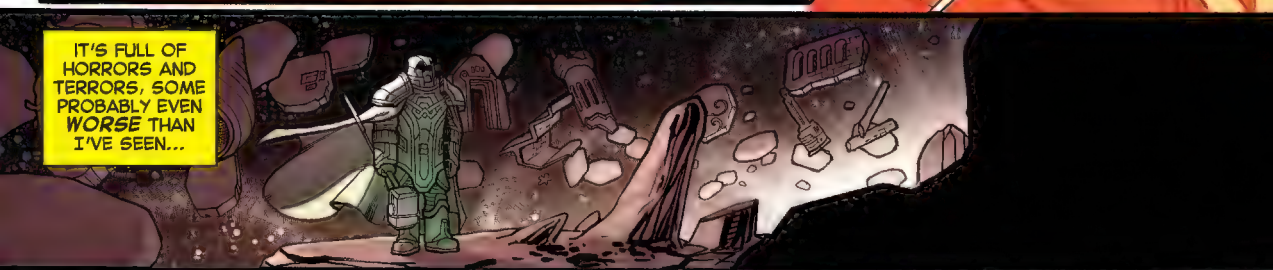
TOO
LATE FOR
THE VORTEX,
PERHAPS, BUT
JUST IN TIME
TO FIND...
THIS.

A
STUNNING
ADDITION--



--FOR MY
COLLECTION.

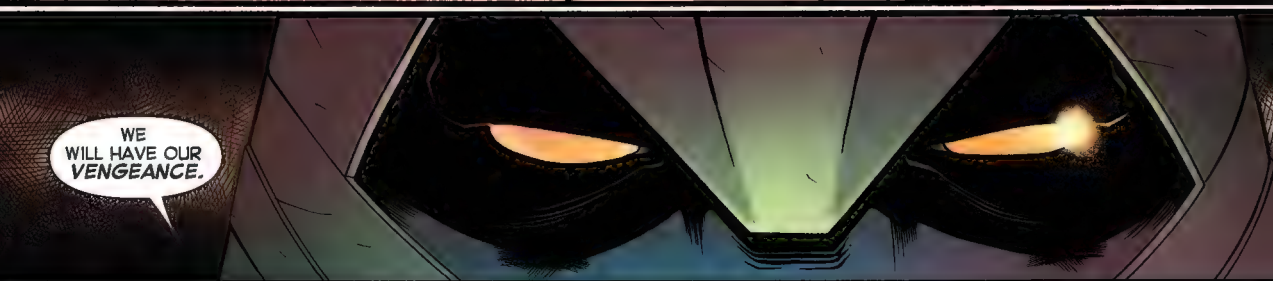
ISN'T
THAT RIGHT,
MISTER KNIFE--
AKA J'SON OF
SPARTAX?



IT'S FULL OF
HORRORS AND
TERRORS, SOME
PROBABLY EVEN
WORSE THAN
I'VE SEEN...



WE WILL
REBUILD.



WE
WILL HAVE OUR
VENGEANCE.

...BUT THAT'S
ONLY PART OF
THE PICTURE.

ARE
YOU WITH
ME, EBONY
MAW?

ALWAYS,
THANE.

THIS
IS YOUR
TIME.

EMBRACE
YOUR DESTINY AS
RULER OF THE
UNIVERSE.


AND
NOW I KNOW
HOW TO DO
IT--

--WITH
THE **BLACK**
VORTEX.

EVERY STAR
IS IN SPACE.

EARTH IS
IN SPACE.

SO IS EVERY
BEAUTIFUL FLOWER
AND SELFLESS ACT.



...WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

THIS TENSION IS UNBEARABLE!

DID SHE SAY YES?

I CAN'T WATCH!

SHUT UP! I CAN'T HEAR!

THIS IS SO HUMAN.

THIS TENSION IS UNBEARABLE!

DID SHE SAY YES?

I CAN'T WATCH!

SHUT UP! I CAN'T HEAR!

THIS IS SO HUMAN.

THIS TENSION IS UNBEARABLE!

I CAN'T WATCH!

DID SHE SAY YES?

SHUT UP! I CAN'T HEAR!

THIS IS SO HUMAN.

THIS TENSION IS **UNBEARABLE!**

DID SHE SAY **YES?**

I CAN'T WATCH!

SHUT UP! I CAN'T HEAR!

THIS IS SO HUMAN.

THIS TENSION IS UNBEARABLE!

DID SHE SAY YES?

I CAN'T WATCH!

SHUT UP! I CAN'T HEAR!

THIS IS SO HUMAN.



DID SHE--IS THAT--?



THAT'S A YES!

I AM GROOOOOT!

WAY TO GO, KITTY!

WAY TO GO, PETE!

I TOTALLY CALLED THAT.



WELL, ROCKET, WE'LL BE SEEING EACH OTHER SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.

OH, GEEZ. THANOS WILL STUMBLE ACROSS THE PHOENIX FORCE OR MANTIS WILL GET KIDNAPPED BY THE SHI'AR AND WE'LL ALL HAVE TO--

UGH!

--TEAM UP AGAIN.



NO, SILLY, FOR THE WEDDING!

WANNA BE MY DATE?

ULP!



I FOUND LOVE
IN OUTER SPACE.

AND THAT'S
WHEN I KNEW.



THE MOST
AMAZING
DISCOVERY--

--IS EACH
OTHER.

AND IF WE
CAN HOLD ON
TO THAT--

--THEN MAYBE,
JUST *MAYBE*--



--WE CAN LIVE
OUR LIVES, FREE
OF FEAR.



THE END

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

THE BLACK VORTEX

CHAPTER 13

ON-SALE
FEBRUARY

THE BLACK VORTEX ALPHA #1

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #24

LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #9

ALL-NEW X-MEN #38

ON-SALE
MARCH

ALL-NEW X-MEN #39

GUARDIANS TEAM-UP #3

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #25

NOVA #28

LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #10

ON-SALE
APRIL

CYCLOPS #12

CAPTAIN MARVEL #14

LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #11

THE BLACK VORTEX OMEGA #1

EXPERIENCE
THE FALLOUT
FROM THE BLACK
VORTEX IN...



ALL-NEW X-MEN #40
COVER BY ANDREA SORRENTINO
AND MARCELO MAIOLO



GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #26
COVER BY VALERIO SCHITI AND JASON KEITH



LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #12
COVER BY PACO MEDINA